

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JERUSALEM 1843

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IS, JO
SUBJECT: ISRAELI DISMISSAL OF BEIT JALA MAYOR

1. BEIT JALA MAYOR BISHARA DAOUD AND THREE MUNICIPAL COUNCILMEN HAVE BEEN DISMISSED FROM THEIR FUNCTIONS BY THE MILITARY GOVERNOR AS A RESULT OF A RECENT CONVICTION BY AN ISRAELI MILITARY TRIBUNAL. DAOUD HAD BEEN SENTENCED BY THE COURT TO SERVE SIX MONTHS FOR ATTACKING POLICEMEN AND THE THREE COUNCILMEN HAD RECEIVED THREE-MONTH SENTENCES FOR THE SAME OFFENSE.

2. THE ACTION BY THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES LATE ON JULY 3 IN DISMISSING THE FOUR CAME AS A SURPRISE BECAUSE EARLIER THAT SAME DAY THEY HAD BEEN INFORMED THAT THEIR SENTENCES HAD BEEN SUSPENDED AND THEY WOULD NOT HAVE TO ACTUALLY SERVE THE SENTENCES. ACCORDING TO JULY 3 JERUSALEM POST, THE ISRAELI DECISION WAS TAKEN AFTER CONSULTATION INVOLVING THE PRIME MINISTER AS WELL AS DEFFIN WEIZMAN AND THE MILITARY GOVERNOR BEL ELEIZER.

3. IN DISCUSSION WITH SEVERAL WEST BANK PERSONALITIES
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(HIKMAT AL-MASRI, FAHD QAWASIMA, AND AZIZ SHEHADEH) AT THE CONGEN JULY 4 RECEPTION, WE UNDERSTAND THAT SEVERAL WEST BANK MAYORS CAUCUSED ON JULY 4 TO CONSIDER WHAT COULD BE DONE TO PREVENT THE MAYOR'S DISMISSAL FROM OFFICE. SHEHADEH SAYS THAT IT HAS BEEN DECIDED TO APPEAL THE DECISION TO ASK THE MILGOV TO SHOW CAUSE WHY THE CONVICTION SHOULD RESULT IN DISMISSAL FROM OFFICE. (JORDANIAN

LAW REQUIRES DISMISSAL FROM MUNICIPAL OFFICE OF AN
OFFICIAL CONVICTED OF A FELONY--THE QUESTION IS WHETHER
DAOUD'S OFFENSE WAS THAT SERIOUS ACCORDING TO
SHEHADEH.)

4. POLITICALLY THE DECISION IS SEEN BY MANY WEST BANKERS
AS RUNNING AGAINST THE RECENT SOFTER LINE ADOPTED BY
WEIZMAN AND THE NEW MILGOV TOWARD THE WEST BANK MAYORS.
DAOUD IS A BANTY ROOSTER-TYPE INDIVIDUAL AND HAS BEEN OUTSPOKENLY
CRITICAL OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION SINCE HIS ELECTION IN 1976
BUT HE IS NOT UNIQUE AMONG WEST BANK MAYORS IN THAT REGARD.
(IT WAS DAOUD WHO IN DON NEFF'S "TIME" PIECE APRIL 3 ON BEIT JALA
REPRESSION SAID "ISRAELIS BEHAVED LIKE BARBARIANS.")
"AL QUDS" HAS ALREADY COMMENTED EDITORIALY
THAT ACTION AGAINST DAOUD IS DISTURBING REMINDER
OF ARBITRARY POWER WHICH ISRAELIS HOLD OVER ELECTED WEST BANK
OFFICIALS.
CONGEN HAS BRIEFED VISITNG MIKE PEAY (L/NEA) MORE
FULLY ON THIS CASE AND HE HAS HAD OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK
WITH SHEHADEH CONCERNING FACTS OF DAOUD'S OFFENSE AND
TRIAL.

5. COMMENT: WE ARE PUZZLED BY ISRAELI ACTION IN REMOVING
DAOUD FROM OFFICE. WHEN CASE FIRST AROSE MONTHS AGO UNDER
PREVIOUS MILGOV HAGOEL, WEST BANKERS ALLEGED THAT ISRAELIS
WOULD USE CONVICTION AS MEANS OF REMOVING IRKSOME DAOUD
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FROM OFFICE. IN LIGHT OF RECENT HONEYMOON BETWEEN ISRAELIS
AND MAYORS, WE, AND MOST WEST BANKERS WE SPOKE TO, HAD NOT
EXPECTED THE NEW MILGOV TO TAKE SUCH ARBITRARY STEP. HOWEVER,
WE SUSPECT FINAL CHAPTER HAS NOT YET BEEN WRITTEN ON THIS
ISSUE AND WILL REPORT SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS.
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